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KABUL PLEASE PASS TO CSTC-A FOR BG GEORGE

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/22/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [SP](#)
SUBJECT: SPAIN'S CONTRIBUTION TO AFGHANISTAN

REF: MADRID 142

Classified By: DEPUTY CHIEF OF MISSION HUGO LLORENS,
REASONS 1.4(B),(D).

11. (C) Summary: Following conversations with visiting CSTC-A Deputy Commanding General George (in Madrid for an MOD-sponsored conference on PRT's in Afghanistan), Deputy Chief of Mission Llorens sought meetings with senior MOD officials to discuss SECDEF's recent letter to MOD Alonso requesting Spain send Civil Guards (Guardia Civil - one of Spain's two national police forces) to Afghanistan to assist in training Afghan police. While our interlocutors made clear that they were reluctant to engage in any substantive conversations before Spain's March 9 general elections and expressed doubt that the Civil Guard had any officers to spare from the fight against terrorism right here in Spain, there were strong indications that Spain is considering ways to boost its effort in Afghanistan. We also believe it is worth another try on the Civil Guard issue after the election. End summary.

12. (C) The DCM met February 20 with MOD Secretary General for Policy Luis Cuesta. The DCM discussed SECDEF's request for Civil Guards for Afghanistan, explaining in detail the importance of the police training mission there and the unique contribution Spanish Civil Guards were in a position to make, being a highly professional national police force. The DCM emphasized the capacity building nature of this effort and the benefits it would yield in terms of increasing security for development work. Acknowledging that Spain could make no announcements before the March 9 election, he asked that Cuesta allow us to bring a small team from CSTC-A to Madrid to discuss the police training mission and where and how the Civil Guard could contribute. Cuesta demurred, noting the electoral climate was too charged for any discussions of additional Spanish undertakings in Afghanistan. He suggested that after March 9,

13. (C) The DCM met February 22 with Chief of Defense General Felix Sanz Roldan and pressed the case for a greater Spanish contribution to the police training mission in Afghanistan. Sanz said frankly that sending more Civil Guard to Afghanistan would be difficult given their domestic duties, which included fighting the terrorist threat in Spain. He also noted the Civil Guard had too few personnel with the linguistic skills for overseas deployments, although he said their were efforts underway to fix this). Nevertheless, Sanz was quick to say that following Spain's March 9 general election, Spain would be seeking congressional approval for a number of additional measures in Afghanistan including deployment of UAVs; deployment of an additional fixed-wing aircraft for inter-theater operations; an offer of a block of

flight hours to ISAF using Spanish fixed-wing transport already in theater; reinforcement of an existing QRF; and, as a result of conversations during Ambassador Nuland's recent visit to Spain (reftel); probably another OMLT. Sanz said the Spanish military was a direct beneficiary of improved Afghan police capabilities and had built or renovated nine police commissariats and planned to do four more in Badghis province.

14. (C) Comment: Although we believe Spain can and should do more in Afghanistan -- and clearly they have some ideas in mind -- this is not something we are going to get them to focus on between now and March 9. We intend to re-engage vigorously after the election and with a view toward the NATO summit in Bucharest.
AGUIRRE